Director, or it may be a CMD. We are trying to evolve a procedure so that, in future, no vacancy remains unfilled for a longer period.

SHRI SURESH A. KESWANI: Sir, the procedure, which is adopted for appointment of EDs and CMDs in the nationalised banks and financial institutions, lacks transparency. There are a number of General Managers who are eligible for these posts, but there is no way that these people could know as to what are the criteria for inviting people for interview, for the posts of EDs and CMDs. This lack of transparency results in various allegations and various rumours. There are allegations that the procedure is influenced by political considerations. Also, there are allegations that there is a nexus between the Deputy Director of the Reserve Bank of India, in charge of banking operations, and the Secretary (Banking). There are allegations that various political forces are at work, or industrial houses are influencing the decisions in regard to, appointment of EDs and CMDs. So, I would urge upon the hon. Minister to kindly tell us whether such a transparency is possible. If so, how is he going to achieve it? How soon can he do this?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): Sir, I do not think the apprehension, which the hon. Member has voiced in this House, is correct. I would like to deny any such allegations-whether it is lack of transparency or it is an interference or conspiracy on the part of certain officials. Recently, we conducted interviews for these posts. There is an Appointments Board for this purpose, which is headed by the Governor, RBI. A Committee has been set up for selection of EDs. This Committee, on the basis of very transparent norms, had invited 63 Chief General Managers from various public sector banks for an interview to the posts of Executive Directors. Sir, sixty of them have turned up. They have been interviewed. The recommendations have been routed through the appointment board. These recommendations are under the consideration of the Government. I would like to say that merit, seniority and professional competence are the considerations which have prevailed in the past, and will continue to prevail in future also and that no other consideration will be allowed to come in the way of this procedure. It is absolutely a merit-based consideration.

Development of tourist places in Kanyakumari

*503 SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the amount spent by Government for the development of tourist places in Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu during the last three years;

(b) the details of the projects and the amount allocated for each project;

(c) the action being taken by Government in this regard; and

(d) whether any amount is lying with the State Government of Tamil Nadu?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) To (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) and (d) The details of project-wise amounts sanctioned and released during the last three years for Kanyakumari are as under :—

(Rs. in lakhs)

Year	Name of the project	Amount Sanctioned	Amount Released
1997-98	Nil	Nil	Nil
1998-99	—	—	—
1	Upgradation-cum-Expansion of existing tourist facilities	20.00	6.00
2	Provision of Public Conveniences	12.00	3.60
3	Construction of Walkways/Pavement along the beach near Gandhi Mandapam and Swimming Pool	25.00	7.50
1999-2000	I	—	—
1	Provision of two Arial Bunched Cable system to replace overhead live wires	25.00	7.50
2	Development/Setting up of Parking lot	50.00	0.15
	Total	132.00	24.75

(c) and (d) Rs. 24.75 lakhs has been released in favour of Tamil Nadu Government as first instalment. Utilisation Certificates for amount released in 1998-99 have not been received from the State Government.

SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM : Sir, I am not satisfied with the reply which has been given by the Hon. Minister. As far as the allocation of funds to Tamil Nadu are concerned, it was Rs. 3.92 crores in 1997-98, Rs. 5.98 crores in 1998-99 and Rs. 3 crores in 1999-2000. This year it is only Rs. 1.84 crores. Sir, one can notice that year by year, it is decreasing. From 1997 till now, there has been a continuous decrease. But, as far as the neighbouring States are concerned, Kerala has got Rs. 32 crores, Karnataka Rs. 36 crores and Andhra Pradesh Rs. 45 crores. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister the reasons for this decrease. In 1995, Rs. 40 crores was allotted to Tamil Nadu for this purpose. I would also like to know whether the State Government of Tamil Nadu has sent any proposal for the allocation of more funds. As far as the number of overseas tourists is concerned, it is increasing. In 1997-98, approximately 6.36 lakh tourists came to Tamil Nadu. In 1998-99 about 7.32 lakh tourists visited there. Up to January 2000, the number of tourists arrivals in approximately 50,000. So, Sir, from this, one can see that Tamil Nadu has become a good tourist place. But the Government has not provided enough funds. I would like to know whether the State Government has asked for more funds or whether the Central Government have allotted more funds for this purpose to the neighbouring States, namely, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. This is my first supplementary.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Sir, the total amount sanctioned for 415 projects in 1999-2000 is Rs. 96.89 crores. Therefore, when the total amount sanctioned for the entire country is Rs. 96 crores, there is no question of sanctioning Rs. 40 crores or Rs. 50 crores for any State, and out of 96.89 crores of rupees, the amount released is only Rs. 21.46 crores. This is because of the procedure. The procedure is that the first instalment of 30% is released with the sanctioning of the project and the second instalment of 50% is released on the receipt of the utilisation certificates. But the Tamil Nadu Government has not provided the utilisation certificates for the last three years for different amounts. Therefore, we could not allocate the funds to that extent.

SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM : Sir, my second supplementary is regarding the details of the projects and the amount allocated for each project. I agree with the hon. Minister that the Tamil Nadu Government has not sent the utilisation certificates for the amount released in 1998-99. But as far as

Kanyakumari is concerned, during the last three years the amount santioned for a project entitled, "Provision of two Arial Bunched Cable system to replace overhead live wires" was Rs. 25 lakhs. Sir, in regard to the another project entitled," Development/Setting up of Parking lot", the amont sanctioned was Rs. 50 lakhs. However, the amount released so far against these projects is almost negligible. Now, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether the Central Government takes any action against the Tourism Departments of the concerned State Governments which have not sent the utilisation certificates for more than three years. There was an article in' 'The Hindu" that the Tamil Nadu Government is indifferent to tourism promotion. As far as Kanyakumari is concerned, there are many people who are ready to invest money for the development of tourism there. It has expressed unhappiness over the Tamil Nadu Government because Order issued in 1991-92, listing out the incentives, concessions and subsidies for the tourism promotion project was not implemented. The post of Chairman and Managing Director of the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Commission has been occupied by the same gentleman for more than 12 years.

Suppose there is a private agency or a private promoter who is ready to improve the tourism, as far as Kanyakumari is concerned. Will you give permission to him through the State Govenrment? Is the Government of India concerned with it?

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Sir, the question is : how much are we allocating for the tourism development in Tamil Nadu? For the entire Seventh Plan period, it was Rs. 4.73 crores, whereas only for 1999-2000, for the benefit of my dear colleague who should be happy, it is Rs. 4.93 crores for the whole of Tamil Nadu.

Regarding Kanyakumari, we have already prioritised and sanctioned five important projects for Rs. 1.32 crores, and Rs. 25 lakhs have been released. Regarding the release of the amount, there is a monitoring system. Every three months, the respective Tourism Secretary visits Delhi and speaks to the Central Tourism Secretary, and we implore upon him to expedite the prioritised projects and come back with the utilisation certificate to get the second and the third instalments. That is the only way. Thirdly, he has asked whether we allow private organisation, private parties, to develop tourism in Kanyakumari. They are most welcome. The Government of India, through its policy, has allowed 100 per cent foreign direct investment in the tourism infrastructure development,

provided the parties have the clearance from the Archaeological Survey of India and also the environmental clearance.

PROF. M SANKARALINGAM : Sir, I am glad to note that the Government is taking a keen interest to develop Kanyakumari, the southernmost end of our country. Moreover, it is a centre of national unity. The Vivekanandapuram was built there. The Valluvar statue has been erected there. So, there is more tourist attraction. To develop Kanyakumari to the international tourist standard, more money is necessary. The statistics given by the Hon. Minister show that in the last three years, only Rs. 24.75 lakhs, out of Rs. 132 lakhs, has been released. So, I want to ask of the Government, considering its importance as a national unity centre and a centre for tourist attraction of an international standard, whether there is any possibility of allocating more funds for Kanyakumari and whether the Government will explore this immediately.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: I appreciate the concern of the Hon. Member. Whatever project proposal comes to the Union Government, it comes through the State Government. They prioritise the project proposal, and they make the proposal. The entire projected cost of their proposal is Rs. 1.32 crores. They can make it more. The release of Rs. 24.75 lakhs is only part of the first instalment. As soon as they give the documents, the utilisation certificate and the certificate for a long lease or transfer of land by the Government for that project, 50 per cent of the amount will be released immediately.

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: Mr. Chairman, while we ask for money for improvement of tourist centres, I want to ask of the Hon. Minister whether something can be done about the quality of tourism in such places. I especially refer to Kanyakumari because I recall that many, many years ago. it was a peaceful, religious place, calm, quiet and clean. I think at that time it was looked-after by the Travancore Government. In recent times, you see nothing but shops, shops and shops, tiny, little shops, more or less cheating the people with all sorts of third-rate trinkets. We do hot want even remotely that the money given for development for high quality tourism should slip into agencies which run these trades. So, I would like to request the Hon. Minister for an increase of those funds. He could also consider the quality of tourism, and the atmosphere of the place so that it is not spoiled by these low level trades. Thank you.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: Sir, it is a very good advice for consideration.

SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it has rightly been said by one of our colleagues that Kanyakumari is a place of Indian unity. A statue

of Tiruvalluvar has recently been installed there. There is also a famous age-old temple where pilgrims from Varanasi visit and pour the Ganges water brought by them. There is also the Vivekananda Rock. There is a need to develop a large number of projects there. As I understood from the hon Minister's reply, only the first instalment could be released to the Government of Tamil Nadu despite the fact that every three months, the Secretary of the Department concerned is supposed to visit Delhi and discuss and sort out the difficulties. Part (a) of my question to the hon. Minister is, would he like to discuss this with his counterpart in the Tamil Nadu State and bring to his notice that despite his efforts some of these difficulties about the receipt of the accounts is still there? If that is done, then this matter can be settled and the further projects can be taken up by the State Government. Or, would he like to speak about the matter to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu? We should not leave such important projects, such important places, only to the State Governments or the State bureaucratic machinery. I have no doubt that the State Government is interested. That is why they have sent some projects. Would he like to discuss this with the Tourism Minister of Tamil Nadu and the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu so that this matter can be settled early and future flow of amounts can be facilitated? Part (b) of my question is this. While appreciating Dr. Raja Ramanna's suggestions, the hon. Minister has said that it is a good advice. If it is a good advice, would he like to advise all the State Governments to keep this particular fact in view, especially when the projects are being sanctioned?

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: Sir, I hope that the former Comptroller and Auditor-General of India and my dear colleague understands the rigors of the financial guidelines of the Union Government.

SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI: I thought I had foregotten my sinful past. Why does he again and again remind me? I want to remind him of his present responsibility and the coordination with the State Government.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: I want to bring this to the notice of the entire House. The thing is, in 1997-98, Rs. 59.74 lakhs were sanctioned for different projects, for seven projects, for Tamil Nadu and Rs. 22.86 lakhs were released. In 1998-99, for 17 projects, Rs. 3.16 crores were sanctioned. Rs. 15.30 lakhs were released. Only Rs. 15 lakhs were released. Now, Rs. 4.93 crores have been sanctioned and Rs. 99 lakhs released. This is because the State Governments, as the implementing agencies for their own proposals, have to come out with all the formalities. They have to complete them. They have to

get us the utilization certificate. They have to give us the land transfer certificate. They have to formally communicate all these things. But there is an enormous delay throughout the country and we have been reminding not only the hon. Chief Ministers of the different States but also the Tourism Ministers and the various Secretaries also about this on a monthly basis, on a bi-monthly basis. That is happening, Sir.

SHRI TN. CHATURVEDI: The pith of my question is very simple. If there are so many formalities which are delaying these matters in the country, then, will the hon. Minister reconsider the formalities? I am talking only about Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu. Will he specifically discuss this matter with the Tourism Minister of Tamil Nadu, or, with the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, and see that the matter is expedited? Not only the people of Tamil Nadu, but the people of the country as a whole, are interested in it. It is not the concern of the State Goverment of Tamil Nadu alone.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: Sir, basically, there are two formalities. One is the Utilization Certificate and the other is the Land Transfer Certificate. Land has not been transferred and the Physical Utilisation Certificate of the project has not been given. There are only two documents, no more documents are there; and those are not being settled. Secondly, I can definitely assure him that I will speak to the hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

The second part of his question is, how to have a balance between the tourist arrivals and the tranquility of the place. There is a conscious awareness throughout the country that tourism is the second important sector of foreign exchange revenue and domestic prosperity, after IT. This year, Tamil Nadu had 2.14 crores of domestic tourists and 68.4 lakhs of foregin tourists. Most of them had come to visit Kanyakumari because of its importance. How to balance this is a very important question which will be addressed to.

SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY: We will persuade the Tamil Nadu Government to furnish the Utilisation Certificate. Will the Minister assure us that he will release the remaining funds on receipt of the Utilization Certificate?

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: Sir, actually, the procedure is that the first instalment of 30 per cent is released without any Utilisation Certificate. When the Union Goverment releases 30 per cent of the funds, we expect physical completion of 30 per cent of the work. When they send the Utilization Certificate, automatically, and other 50 per cent is released. We are more than interested in

fulfilling our responsiblility. We want to release the Money and we want things to happen.

SHRI CM. IBRAHIM: I am happy that the Minister has agreed that after IT, we are giving the second important priority to tourism. I would like to know whether the Finance Ministry and the Planning Commission have increased the allocation for tourism or not. अब तो देश बच नहीं सकता। अब तो युग है बेचने का । चार साल में सारा कुछ बेच देंगे । तब तो युग बचेगा दिखाने को तो उस दिखाने के युग के लिए आप अब क्या कुछ तैयारी करेंगे ?

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: Sir, this does not purport to the main question.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes; you are right. Now, we will take up the next question. Question No. 504.

Recovery suit against Essar Power Ltd.

*504. SHRI R. S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the recovery suit file by Andhra Bank against Essar Power Ltd; is pending with the Debt Recovery Tribunal at Mumbai;

(b) if so, the details thereof, alongwith the amount sanctioned as loan to the company,

(c) the steps taken by Andhra Bank for recovery of loan before filing the suit; and

(d) the reaction of Essar Power Ltd., thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Andhra Bank has filed a recovery application before the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT), Mumbai on 31st August, 1999 for the recovery of outstanding dues of Essar Power Limited. The application is pending before DRT, Mumbai. The application has been filed for recovery of balance outstanding dues amounting to Rs 17.70 crore against the loan of Rs 50 crore sanctioned to the company in 1994.